

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) ~~The A~~ ballast system of claim 11 further comprising:

a wastewater treatment system for receiving and treating wastewater;

a wastewater ballast tank for storing the treated wastewater as ballast;

a ballast discharge system for discharging the treated wastewater from said

wastewater ballast tank;

a monitoring unit for testing the treated wastewater;

a disinfection unit for disinfecting the treated wastewater that is stored in said

wastewater ballast tank;

a pump for circulating the stored, treated wastewater through said disinfection unit;

and

a control system, wherein the control system controls operation of said wastewater treatment system, said ballast discharge system, said monitoring unit, said disinfection unit, and said pump.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) ~~The A contingency ballast method comprising method of claim 15, wherein the step of taking in local seawater as ballast upon entry into regional waters comprises the steps of:~~

treating wastewater;

storing treated wastewater;

testing the treated wastewater;

taking in non-local or non-regional seawater as ballast at sea;

discharging said non-local or non-regional seawater ballast upon entering local or regional waters;

taking in local or regional seawater as ballast upon entering said local or regional waters;

discharging the treated wastewater during ballast operations when the treated wastewater meets testing thresholds;

~~discharging non-local seawater ballast upon entering regional waters; and~~

~~taking in regional seawater as ballast.~~

discharging said local or regional seawater ballast during in-port ballast operations when the treated wastewater does not meet testing thresholds.

17. (New) The ballast system of claim 14, wherein said wastewater treatment system comprises:

a sludge and particulate removal system; and  
  
a decontamination unit.

18. (New) The ballast system of claim 14, further comprising:  
  
at least one seawater ballast tank for receiving, holding, and discharging seawater ballast; and  
  
at least one sample port for testing the treated wastewater prior to discharge.

19. (New) The ballast system of claim 14, wherein said disinfection unit comprises an ultraviolet treatment unit.

20. (New) The contingency ballast method of claim 16, wherein the step of treating said wastewater comprises:

filtering the wastewater to remove sludge and particulate matter; and  
  
decontaminating said wastewater to destroy fecal coliforms, bacteria, and pathogens.

21. (New) The contingency ballast method of claim 20, wherein the step of decontaminating said wastewater comprises:

dosing said wastewater with electromagnetic radiation.

22. (New) The contingency ballast method of claim 16, further comprising:  
  
retreating said treated wastewater when the tested wastewater does not meet  
predetermined thresholds.

23. (New) The contingency ballast method of claim 16, further comprising:  
  
sampling said treated wastewater; and  
  
testing samples of said treated wastewater.

24. (New) The contingency ballast method of claim 16, further comprising:  
  
retreating said stored treated wastewater.

25. (New) The contingency ballast method of claim 16, wherein the step of storing  
said treated wastewater comprises:  
  
circulating the stored wastewater through a disinfection unit to destroy fecal  
coliforms, bacteria, and other pathogens.

26. (New) A wastewater ballast method comprising the steps in the order of:  
  
collecting wastewater generated during operation of a vessel;

filtering said wastewater;  
  
treating said wastewater to meet applicable regulatory standards;  
  
storing said treated wastewater in a wastewater ballast tank;  
  
transferring said treated wastewater to a discharge unit; and  
  
discharging said treated wastewater from said vessel.

27. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 26, further comprising:

monitoring said treated wastewater using a monitoring unit prior to said storing step.

28. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 27, wherein said monitoring unit includes a turbidity monitor to measure a turbidity of said treated wastewater.

29. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 26, wherein said treated wastewater is discharged one of overboard and at a disposal facility ashore.

30. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 27, wherein said monitoring step includes:

monitoring said treated wastewater to ensure that said treated wastewater meets predetermined thresholds before storing said treated wastewater in said wastewater ballast tank.

31. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 30, wherein when said treated wastewater does not meet said predetermined thresholds, said filtering and treating step is repeated.

32. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 26, wherein said filtering and treating step includes ensuring that said wastewater meets applicable federal, state, and local environmental, health and regulatory requirements.

33. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 26, wherein said filtering and treatment step includes decontaminating said filtered wastewater using electromagnetic radiation.

34. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 26, further comprising:  
  
recirculating said treated wastewater through a first disinfection unit.

35. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 34, wherein said first disinfection unit comprises one of an ultraviolet disinfection unit and a non-chemical disinfectant.

36. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 35, further comprising:  
refiltering and retreating said treated wastewater from said wastewater ballast tank.

37. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 34, further comprising:  
disinfecting said treated wastewater from said wastewater ballast tank using a second disinfection unit.

38. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 37, wherein said second disinfection unit comprises one of an ultraviolet disinfection unit and a non-chemical disinfectant.

39. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 37, wherein said second disinfection unit includes a wastewater ballast discharge unit.

40. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 26, further comprising:

sampling said treated wastewater after said filtering and treating step, for compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental, health and regulator requirements.

41. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 27, further comprising:

sampling said treated wastewater after said monitoring step, for compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental, health and regulatory requirements.

42. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 34, further comprising:

sampling said treated wastewater after said recirculating step, for compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental, health and regulatory requirements.

43. (New) The wastewater ballast method of claim 26, further comprising:

sampling said treated wastewater after said transferring step, for compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental, health and regulatory requirements.

44. (New) A wastewater ballast system, comprising:

a filtering unit for filtering untreated wastewater from a vessel;

a decontaminating unit for treating said filtered wastewater to meet applicable regulatory standards;



a monitoring unit for monitoring said treated wastewater to ensure that said treated wastewater meets predetermined thresholds;

a wastewater ballast tank for storing said treated wastewater;

a first disinfection unit for disinfecting said treated wastewater in said wastewater ballast tank;

a wastewater ballast discharge unit for discharging said treated wastewater from said wastewater ballast tank; and

a sample port for sampling said treated wastewater after at least one of said wastewater treatment unit, said monitoring unit, said wastewater ballast tank, said first disinfection unit, and said wastewater ballast discharge unit, for compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental, health and regulatory requirements.

45. (New) The wastewater ballast system of claim 44, wherein said monitoring unit comprises a turbidity monitor to measure a turbidity of said treated wastewater.

46. (New) The wastewater ballast system of claim 44, wherein said first disinfection unit comprises one of an ultraviolet disinfection unit and a non-chemical disinfectant.

47. (New) The wastewater ballast system of claim 46, further comprising:

a second disinfection unit for disinfecting said treated wastewater from said wastewater ballast tank.

48. (New) The wastewater ballast system of claim 46, wherein said second disinfection unit comprises one of an ultraviolet disinfection unit and a non-chemical disinfectant.

49. (New) The wastewater ballast system of claim 48, wherein said second disinfection unit includes a wastewater ballast discharge unit.

50. (New) A wastewater ballast system, comprising:

a filtering unit for filtering untreated wastewater from a vessel;

a decontaminating unit for treating said filtered wastewater to meet applicable regulatory standards;

a monitoring unit for monitoring said treated wastewater to ensure that said treated wastewater meets predetermined thresholds;

a wastewater ballast tank for storing said treated wastewater;

a first disinfection unit for disinfecting said treated wastewater in said wastewater ballast tank;

a wastewater ballast discharge unit for discharging said treated wastewater from said wastewater ballast tank; and

a sample port for sampling said treated wastewater after at least one of said wastewater treatment unit, said monitoring unit, said wastewater ballast tank, said first disinfection unit, and said wastewater ballast discharge unit, for compliance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental, health and regulatory requirements; and

a control system for controlling the operation of at least one of said wastewater treatment unit, said monitoring unit, said first disinfection unit, said wastewater ballast tank, and said wastewater ballast discharge unit